rice and other foodgrains from time to time to avoid heavy and unjustifiable loss to Government. The public can rest assured that the prices charged will be as low as is possible consistent with a fair return to State cultivators and avoidance of heavy loss to Government in respect of imported food.

FOOD PRODUCTION SCHEMES

The Cochin Government have not contented themselves with assuming the role of a suppliant for food, they have done what they could, not only to ensure the equitable distribution of what is available at reasonable prices, as described above, but also to increase production and the nutritive value of the food available. The Food Production drive so vigorously conducted by the Hon'ble Minister has resulted in 11,249 acres including reserve forest areas being leased out for cultivation, no mean achievement in this densely populated State. Also at the suggestion of the European member of this House Government launched an ambitious scheme for the clearing, under Government control, of vast areas of forests and the planting of hill paddy and other food crops. In all 12,000 acres have been cleared or partially cleared, and up to now 5,375 acres have been sown with hill paddy, 2,000 acres planted with tapioca and 625 acres with other crops. The Superintendent hopes to plant up the remaining 4,000 acres in the near future. It was hoped to cultivate a greater extent of hill paddy this year, but sufficient seeds could not be obtained. The intention is greatly to increase the area under hill paddy next season, when the total area will be increased to 20,000 acres. Considerable difficulties were experienced in rushing through such large scale agricultural operations in so short a time involving the clear felling of large areas of forest in areas infected with malaria, at a time when, due to extensive recruitment for Assam and Ceylon labour units, little surplus labour fit for heavy manual work was available. In the circumstances, the progress made, between December when work started and July, must be considered satisfactory. Financially good results are expected; as against an estimated expenditure of Rs. 7·20 lakhs this year, and some expenditure on harvesting operations next year, a crop worth Rs. 13,10,000 is expected to be harvested, besides large receipts from the sale of timber. A large portion of the area is not suitable for permanent cultivation and arrangements are being made for reafforestation along with cultivation. Messrs. Walmesley and I. Raman Menon have rendered valuable service as Honorary Advisers.

Government have also endeavoured to increase the nutritive value of rice and its food content by insisting on undermilling and encouraging handpounding. A scheme is being evolved by the War Publicty Department, aided by a handsome donation from Mr. Alagappa Chettiar, to put into use throughout the State a large number of wooden hand-pounding machines which besides producing more nutritive rice, will give part time employment to many women.

Thus the Cochin Government in making their claim to a fair share of foodgrains available in India can assert that they have done everything within their power to improve the position in the State, by eliminating almost entirely the hoarder and the profiteer, by obtaining physical possession of most of the grain surplus to the cultivators' requirements and all imported grain, by distributing it equitably throughout the State, treating rich and poor alike and by increasing home production so far as is possible. We have done our part, and we feel that justice demands that the surplus and selfsufficient areas in other parts of India should see to it that we do not continue to suffer from scarcity as we have been for the past 15 months.

Before I leave the subject of food, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar once more for his friendly and powerful co-operation extended again to Cochin, during this year, in tackling both this major problem and other problems, in respect of which the two States have worked together in friendly and fruitful harmony.

STANDARD CLOTH

Next only to food among the necessities of life comes cloth, and a provision of Rs. 2,20,000 for 1118 and Rs. 31,20,000 for 1119 has been made under "Advances Recoverable" for the purchase of Standard Cloth. Government had from the very beginning agreed to participate in the Standard Cloth Scheme of the Government of India and our first indent was sent so far back as December 8th 1942. The Government have now been informed that an allotment of 4,64,845 yards of Standard Cloth will be sent to the State very shortly, being our quota from May to July. It will be followed by a further quota of 31 lakhs yards to be delivered between August and January. Cloth will be distributed through Fair Price Shops at the rate of 3 yards per head for adults and 1·5 yards for children.

IRRIGATION SCHEMES

Closely connected with increased food production is the question of irrigation. The Government believe that a forward policy in irrigation is essential at this time and have acted

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